

Economic and Social Council  
Management Segment

**Presentation of the 2020 Report  
of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP)  
by  
José Antonio Ocampo  
Chair of the CDP  
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Madame President,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues,

I am pleased to introduce the Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its 22nd Session. The Committee met in plenary session in New York from 24-27 February and we are proud to have put together a good report with solid recommendations. In my statement today, I will focus on our main conclusions, but before I do so please allow me a few words on the current global challenge.

The Covid-19 crisis threatens to undo LDCs' progress towards sustainable development made over the past decades. LDCs public health systems are often underdeveloped and unable to cope with the widespread pandemic. Lockdowns and social distancing measures to stop the spread are more difficult to implement and can have particularly debilitating impacts on livelihoods. The Committee for Development Policy (CDP) is deeply concerned about the possible negative impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on LDCs. The Committee is also anxious that Covid-19 may negatively impact the preparations of LDCs that are graduating and those to be considered for graduation at the next triennial review scheduled to take place in February 2021. The intention is to undertake the review at this date unless Covid-19 related disruptions would make it impossible. At the 2021 triennial review, the CDP will decide whether to recommend the following five countries for graduation: Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, and Timor-Leste. The CDP will also identify countries that meet the criteria for graduation for the first time. The LDC indicators will not reflect the impact of Covid-19 in 2021. However, the CDP will start reviewing information on Covid-19 and its country-specific impacts and take this information into account when making its decisions.

Madame President,

Turning on this year's CDP plenary report, on the theme of the Economic and Social Council for 2020, the Committee stressed that trends in inequality and climate change were driving the 2030 Agenda backwards. Inequalities in income and multiple other negative dimensions of well-being are rising and the weak global response to climate change is pushing people behind. The CDP

stressed that inequality and climate change cannot be treated as issues on the margin of sustainable development policies.

The Committee also reviewed its analysis on the reflection of key principles and cross-cutting issues in the voluntary national reviews. Among the key findings, the Committee highlighted the fact that, while most countries acknowledge the principle of leaving no one behind, voluntary national reviews often remain vague on how to implement it in practice. Regarding the reporting on Sustainable Development Goal 17, the Committee raised concern about the fact that certain targets such as policy space and leadership for least developed countries were hardly mentioned. The finding that Goal 10 on reduced inequalities receives the least attention in voluntary national reviews was also met with concern.

The Committee finalized its multi-year programme on the comprehensive review of the least developed country criteria. It confirmed that LDCs will be identified using three criteria: gross national income per capita, human assets index and economic and environmental vulnerability index. The Committee further emphasized gender inequities and malnutrition in the human assets index. It simplified the structure of the environmental vulnerability index and broadened its coverage of environmental vulnerabilities. The refined criteria will be applied at the 2021 triennial review of the list of least developed countries, utilizing the established graduation and inclusion rules. The Committee improved the graduation framework by introducing a set of supplementary indicators, which it uses before making country recommendations. It will also include a statement on the length of the preparatory period in its graduation recommendations and strengthen the graduation narrative by including suggestions for priorities and the type of support needed to ensure smooth transition.

In its monitoring of countries that are graduating and have graduated from the least developed country category, the Committee reviewed the cases of Angola, Bhutan, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which are graduating, and Equatorial Guinea, a graduated country. The Committee expressed its concern on declining income, high inequality and limited diversification in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. It will continue to monitor these countries closely in terms of the income sustainability and macroeconomic stability. The Committee also discussed actions to improve the effectiveness of the monitoring mechanism and to encourage the participation of the countries in the monitoring exercise.

As the CDP has often pointed out, LDC graduation does not necessarily mean that countries need less support. The CDP this year has continued its work on improving support for graduating and graduated countries. The Committee reiterated that many least developed countries are concerned about losing international support measures following their graduation and recommended the continuation of current pilot initiatives on improving the process to support graduating countries. It also called for new and innovative forms of assistance for graduating and graduated countries where possible.

Finally, the Committee reiterated its recommendation that the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries adopt the theme “Expanding productive capacity for sustainable

development” as an organizing framework for the new programme of action for the least developed countries for the decade 2021–2030.

Madame President,

The items I elucidated are big challenges in a diversified agenda, ranging from long-standing development topics to emerging issues such as the devastating effects of Covid-19. We as a Committee feel privileged to contribute to the ECOSOC process and support your work by providing analysis and policy advice, and we look forward to continue working with the Council in the coming years.

I thank you for your kind attention.